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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON,

July 20, 1985

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT

THE HONORABLE GEORGE P. SHULTZ
The Secretary of State

THE HONORABLE JAMES A. BAKER, III
The Secretary of Treasury

THE HONORABLE CASPAR W. WEINBERGER
The Secretary of Defense

THE HONORABLE EDWIN MEESE, III
The Attorney General

THE HONORABLE ELIZABETH H. DOLE
The Secretary of Transportation

THE HONORABLE DAVID A. STOCKMAN
The Director, Office of Management and Budget

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM J. CASEY
The Director of Central Intelligence

GENERAL JOHN W. VESSEY, JR.
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

SUBJECT: National Security Decision Directive: Task Force on Combatting Terrorism (NSDD-179) (C)

The President has signed the subject NSDD and it is transmitted herewith. (U)

FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Robert C. McFarlane

Attachment
National Security Decision Directive

ON FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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National Security
Decision Directive 179

TASK FORCE ON COMBATTING TERRORISM (U)

International terrorism poses an increasing threat to U.S. citizens and our interests. Terrorists are waging a war against, not only the United States, but all civilized society in which innocent civilians are intentional victims and our servicemen are specific targets. (U)

The United States Government has an obligation to protect its citizens and interests against terrorists who have so little regard for human life and the values we cherish. To the extent we can, we should undertake action in concert with other nations which share our democratic institutions to combat the menace of terrorism. We must, however, be prepared to act unilaterally when necessary. It is, therefore, imperative that we develop a sustained program for combatting terrorism. (C)

To ensure that all appropriate resources of the United States Government are dedicated to this task, the Vice President is appointed to convene a government-wide task force on combatting terrorism. (U)

The Vice President's task force will:

-- review and evaluate the effectiveness of current U.S. policy and programs on combatting terrorism, to include:

- an assessment of national priorities currently assigned to effectively combat terrorism, especially earlier recommendations regarding organization in NSDD-30 and adequacy of intelligence responsibilities in NSDD-138 and Presidential Executive Order 12333;

- the assignment of responsibilities and accountability for ensuring interagency cooperation and coordination before, during, and after a terrorist incident;

- a review and evaluation of present laws and law enforcement programs dealing with terrorism;

- the adequacy of public awareness and support;

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- provisions for funding and personnel; and
- an evaluation of current levels of programs of international cooperation and coordination.

-- make recommendations as appropriate to the President by the end of 1985. (C)

The task force on combatting terrorism, chaired by the Vice President, will include the Secretaries of State, Treasury, Defense, and Transportation; the Attorney General, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Director of Central Intelligence; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Chief of Staff to the President; the Chief of Staff to the Vice President; the Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs; the Executive Director of the Task Force; and others as appropriate. (U)

The Vice President will appoint a senior Executive Director for the task force who will work under the direct supervision of the Vice President. The Executive Director may task any government department or agency, individual or organization to contribute to the work of the task force. To support the work of the task force, a working group will be established for which members may be drawn from departments/agencies represented on the Interdepartmental Group on Combatting Terrorism, the Interagency Intelligence Committee on Terrorism, and others as appropriate. The working group will prepare substantive recommendations to the task force for consideration. (U)

The task force will select a group of consultants which will provide advice to the task force as necessary. A Secretariat Staff for the task force may be established as appropriate. (U)

Ronald Reagan

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